

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An information exchange system comprising:
a link to a communication network coupled to a plurality of partner databases storing information related to carrier availability;
a database coupled to said link, said database storing a demand entry and a plurality of carrier entries that arrive to said database through said communication network, said demand entry comprising shipping demand specifications and said plurality of carrier entries comprising carrier availability information; and
a logic unit coupled to said database, said logic unit receiving said demand entry, automatically selecting one of said plurality of carrier entries based on an attribute of said demand entry, and automatically booking said selected carrier entry in response to said demand entry.

2. (canceled).

3. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said logic unit notifies a user when one of a demand entry and a carrier entry is received.

4. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, further comprising an Enterprise Resource Planning system that forwards shipping demand

specifications and carrier availability information to said database.

5. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said logic unit allows a user to define a subgroup within said exchange system and to limit unrestricted access of at least a portion of said database only to members of said subgroup.

6. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said demand entry comprises a request for a demand report containing at least a portion of shipping demand specifications.

7. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 6, wherein said demand entry further comprises a criterion said logic unit uses to decide entries to include in said demand report.

8. (original) The information exchange system of claim 6, wherein said communication network is the Internet and said demand report comprises hyperlinks to other reports containing at least one of a shipping demand specification and carrier availability information.

9. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said demand entry comprises a carrier availability report containing at least one entry comprising carrier availability information stored in said database.

10. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 9, wherein said demand entry further comprises a criterion said logic unit uses to decide entries to include in said carrier availability report.

11. (original) The information exchange system of claim 9, wherein communication network is the Internet and said carrier availability report comprises hyperlinks to other reports containing details of carrier availability information.

12. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said shipping demand specification comprises at least one of a route, a point of origin, a destination, a vehicle type, date(s) of availability, cargo dimensions, cargo weight, cargo content, and an offer price.

13. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said carrier availability information comprises at least one of carrier mobile unit routes, point of origin, destination, vehicle type, date(s) of availability, cargo dimensions, cargo weight, cargo content, and a price.

14. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said logic unit alerts a user when one or more parameters of a shipping demand entry match one or more parameters of a carrier availability entry.

15. (original) The information exchange system of claim 14, wherein said logic unit provides a user with an option to make capacity-based arrangements.

16. (original) The information exchange system of claim 14, wherein said logic unit provides a user with an option to conduct a transaction over said communication network.

17. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said demand entry identifies at least one demand entry, and wherein said response comprises a match report listing carrier entries having parameters that at least partially match the parameters of the identified demand entry.

18. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said demand entry identifies at least one carrier availability entry and said response comprises a match report listing shipping demand entries having parameters that at least partially match the parameters of the identified carrier availability entry.

19. (previously presented) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said demand entry comprises one of an implied request and an express request for said logic unit to store received information in said database.

20. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, further comprising a fleet monitoring system that monitors locations of delivery vehicles.

21. (original) The information exchange system of claim 20, wherein said logic unit alerts a delivery vehicle when a new demand entry matches a location of said delivery vehicle as determined by said fleet monitoring system.

22. (original) The information exchange system of claim 20, wherein each of said delivery vehicles contains a GPS unit and a wireless modem that transmits location data for each of said delivery vehicles to said fleet monitoring system.

23. (original) The information exchange system of claim 22, wherein said wireless modem provides an Internet connection to the fleet monitoring system.

24. (original) The information exchange system of claim 20, wherein at least one of said delivery vehicles contains a portal allowing a driver to see demands from the database.

25. (original) The information exchange system of claim 20, wherein a GPS unit and a wireless modem in one of said delivery vehicles automatically transmit location data for said delivery vehicle to the fleet monitoring system, and the logic uses the location data in determining whether to send an alert to the delivery vehicle.

26. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said logic unit formulates said response when a new entry is received.

27. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said logic unit formulates said response at a predetermined time interval.

28. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said response is a business analysis report comprising at least one of said demand entries and said carrier entries entered into said database during a selected date range and details of transactions relating to said entries.

29. (original) The information exchange system of claim 1, wherein said shipping demand specification comprises an offer price and said carrier availability information comprises a bid price, and wherein said logic unit arranges a transaction between a shipper and a carrier based on the difference between said offer price and said bid price.

30. (currently amended) A method comprising:
receiving a demand entry from a first user, said demand entry comprising shipping demand specifications;
receiving a carrier entry from a second user, said carrier entry comprising carrier availability information;
storing said received demand entry and said received carrier entry in a database comprising a plurality of carrier entries;

automatically selecting one of said plurality of carrier entries based on an attribute of said demand entry; and

automatically booking said selected carrier entry in response to said demand entry.

31-32. (canceled).

33. (original) The method of claim 30, wherein said database receives at least one of a request and an entry from Enterprise Resource Planning system.

34. (original) The method of claim 30, further comprising allowing a user to define a subgroup of shippers and carriers and granting unrestricted access to said database only to said subgroup.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, further comprising comparing parameters of said received demand entry or of said received carrier entry to demand or carrier entries in said database and notifying said user if parameters of said received demand entry or received carrier entry at least partially match the parameters of at least one of said carrier entries or of at least one of said demand entries in said database.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein said received demand entry comprises an offer price and said received carrier entry comprises a bid

price, further comprising executing a transaction over a communication network between a first user who entered said offer price and a second user who entered said bid price.

37. (original) The method of claim 35, further comprising providing a user with at least one of matching demand specifications and matching availability information.

38. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein said demand entry comprises at least one criterion and wherein said response comprises at least one entry that meets said criterion.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein said received demand entry or said received carrier entry comprises at least one of a route, a point of origin, a destination, a vehicle type, a date of availability, cargo dimensions, cargo weight, cargo content, and a price.

40. (original) The method of claim 30, further comprising monitoring locations of delivery vehicles.

41. (original) The method of claim 39, further comprising alerting a delivery vehicle when the location of said delivery vehicle matches a parameter of a demand entry.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein said delivery vehicle comprises a location determining unit and a wireless communication device connected to a communication network.